

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Date project completed:

31/03/1999

Research and Development

Final Project Report

(Not to be used for LINK projects)

Section 1 : Identification sheet

1. (a)	MAFF Project Code	OF0172	
(b)	Project Title	Animal health and welfare in organic livestock systems: Identification of constraints and priorities	
(c)	MAFF Project Officer		
(d)	Name and address of contractor		
		Postcode	
(e)	Contractor's Project Officer		
(f)	Project start date	01/10/1998	Project end date 31/03/1999
(g)	Final year costs:	approved expenditure	
		actual expenditure	
(h)	Total project costs / total staff input:	approved project expenditure	
		actual project expenditure	
		*approved staff input	
		*actual staff input	
(i)	Date report sent to MAFF		
(j)	Is there any Intellectual Property arising from this project ?		

*staff years of direct science effort

Section 2 : Scientific objectives / Milestones

2. Please list the scientific objectives as set out in CSG 7 (ROAME B). If necessary these can be expressed in an abbreviated form. Indicate where amendments have been agreed with the MAFF Project Officer, giving the date of amendment.

1. To identify key constraints and critical points in the application of animal health care and welfare on organic farms.
2. To relate these to the application of current organic farming standards;
3. To provide recommendations for the further development of organic livestock standards
4. To provide guidelines on animal health and welfare to organic producers;
5. To investigate future research priorities in organic livestock production.

3. List the primary milestones for the final year.

It is the responsibility of the contractor to check fully that ALL primary milestones have been met and to provide a detailed explanation if this has not proved possible

Milestones		Target date	Milestones met?	
Number	Title		in full	on time

If any milestones have not been met in the final year, an explanation should be included in Section 5.

Section 3 : Declaration

4. I declare that the information I have given in this report is correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that the information contained in this form may be held on a computer system.

Signature

Date

Name

Position in Organisation

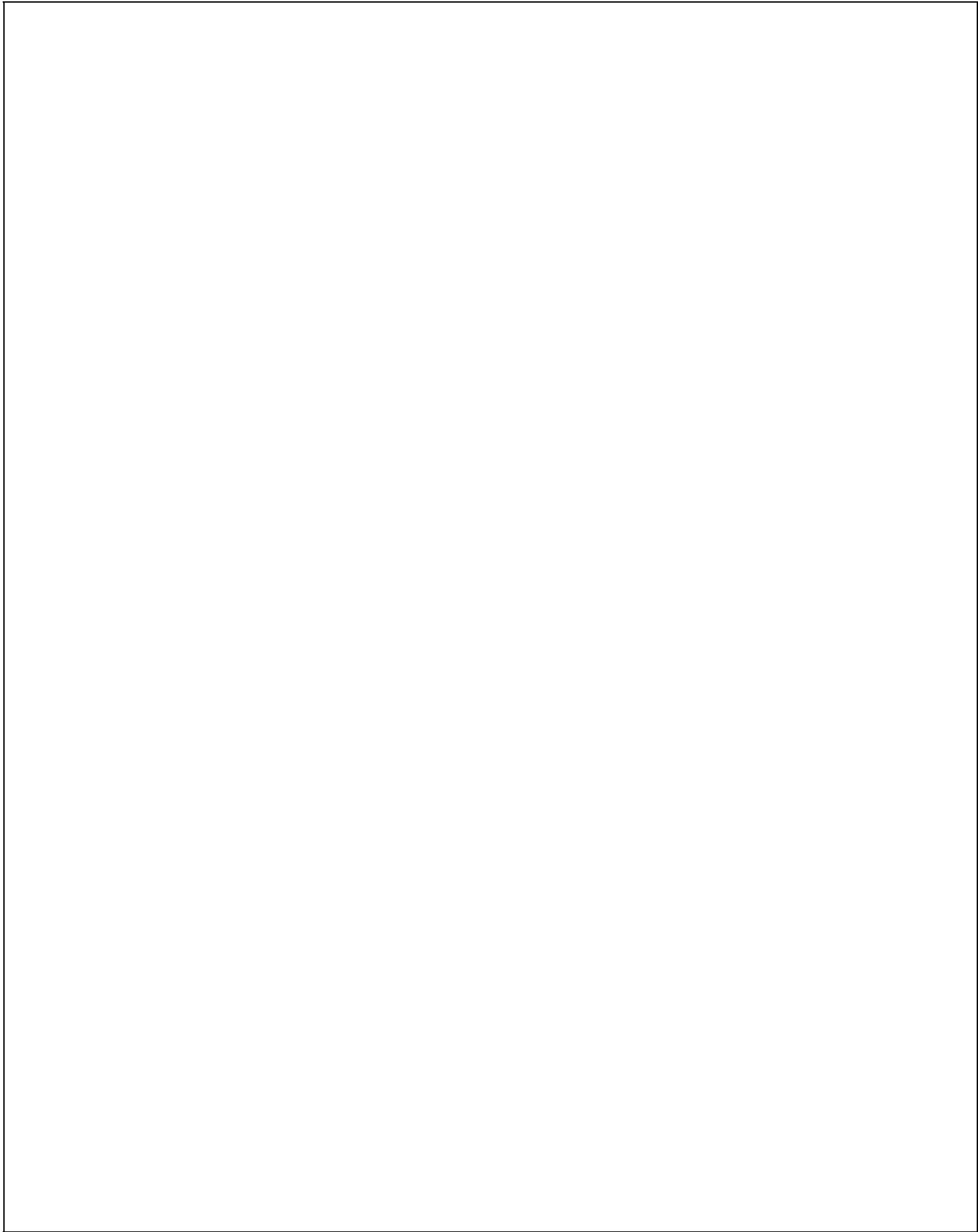
Section 4 : Executive summary

Policy recommendations

1. There should be careful consideration of organic standards generally, and the new EU organic livestock production standards specifically, with regard to animal health and welfare, with a greater emphasis on disease control and eradication on a herd basis.
2. There are increasingly more alternative health products being introduced into the organic livestock sector. The sector bodies should respond by monitoring and evaluating these and provide producer recommendations so as to safeguard animal welfare, producers and consumers.
3. It is recommended that, before and during conversion, a written protocol be drawn-up for each individual farm, and should focus on known farm health problems.
4. The organic standards should reflect the specific issues concerned with converting hill and upland systems to organic production, particularly with regard to sheep scab in open hill situations, mineral deficiencies and the role of the stratified sheep industry in organic farming.
5. Farm records need to be used effectively to evaluate the animal health status of organic livestock. There is a requirement for training of advisors and inspectors in the use of basic epidemiological methods to achieve this.
6. It would be appropriate, as part of a farm health plan, for organic farmers to report on post-mortem findings when animals are sent for slaughter. The feasibility of introducing post-mortem reports as a requirement for organic certification of abattoirs should be investigated.
7. Organic farmers should be required to participate in regional and national health schemes provided these are acceptable under organic standards.

Research recommendations

1. The overall research emphasis should be focused on innovative research aimed at positive health care or health and welfare promoting husbandry rather than on lengthy and expensive efficacy studies of alternative treatments.
2. With regard to surveillance:
 - a) Recent converters and farms in-conversion should be surveyed in order to identify and monitor emerging health, welfare and production constraints.
 - b) There should be continued epidemiological surveillance of key production diseases such as mastitis and lameness.
3. Further research into bovine mastitis is required in order to:
 - a) develop alternative methods for mastitis control without antibiotic dry cow therapy;
 - b) investigate the perception and importance of somatic cell count control strategies on organic dairy farms.
4. Breeding studies specific to the requirement of organic ruminant systems should be conducted that focus on the relationship between disease resistance and commercial traits.
5. The assessment of nutritional deficiencies in organic systems and the development of alternative approaches to mineral/nutrient supplementation are required. Epidemiological studies should be combined with soil and herbage surveys in order to assess the extent of this problem on organic farms.
6. Alternative approaches for internal parasite control in organic systems requires a continued research effort and should focus on livestock breeding, biological control and the use of novel plants and plant extracts.
7. Animal welfare research should focus on:
 - a) The development of animal welfare assessment methods as part of the on-farm management system, to provide producers, advisors and policy-makers with a tool to assist in efforts to achieve improved animal welfare. This should include an evaluation of the appropriateness of existing European methods to the UK.
 - b) The development of welfare-friendly production systems, including housing and husbandry strategies suitable for organic systems.
8. A large number of producers are currently using alternative treatments as well established strategies. These strategies should be recorded, monitored and evaluated before embarking on efficacy testing of selected treatments.
9. Suitable animal health plans should be developed for farms during conversion so as to ensure the eradication and control of key diseases.
10. There is a need for the development of technical and advisory material for producers, advisors and veterinarians.



Section 5 : Scientific report